

Population Distribution, Density and Development Indicators in Nigeria: The Cross River State Example.

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Abstract: The main thrust of this paper is to examine: *Population distribution, density and development indicators in Nigeria: The Cross River State example.* The empirical approach utilized in the paper was dependent on the Cross River State Bureau of Statistics. The demographic dividend of the Nigerian population and that of Cross River State has changed overtime because of the change in the population structure and composition. The undermining factors are the socio-economic variables like the income level, migration, place of residence and among other variables. Most of these variables have influenced population distribution and density. Population growth has remained one of the development indicators in Nigeria and other African society. The Cross River State Demographic Dividend has projected that Cross River State population distribution and density will increase progressively. Demographically, population growth is a major indicator and pull factors of development and international support funds. Therefore, country that is densely populated has a comparative advantage over the less populated nations. Hence, the paper recommend that government of Cross River State government should embark on the development of satellite towns to decongest the metropolis, the work also recommend that government in partnership with the development partners and Non-Governmental Organization(NGOs.) should design poverty reduction and employment generation strategies in the rural communities to check the rural-urban migration. This will balanced population distribution and density.

Keywords: Population, distribution, dividend, density and development indicators

Date of Submission: 25-04-2020

Date of Acceptance: 08-05-2020

I. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Nigeria's population is asymmetrically distributed across the country. The population cut across large areas in the Chad Basin, the middle Niger Valley, and the grassland plains, among others which are sparsely populated over the years. Some demographic factors have been identified as being responsible for the uneven population in Nigeria. Nigeria has collected data on demographic statistics through censuses, vital registration systems, and sample surveys which has shown the population spread of the Nigerian inhabitants (Anusionwu, & Chukwuma, 2018).

The spread of this population is the function of the economic activities peculiar to the regions. The economic boom of a particular area is an induced and pulled factor of migrants to the geographical location thereby leading to population density or otherwise. population distribution is the arrangement of the population on a certain area in accordance with conditions and requirements of the society that is also tied to the demography of the area (Manoj, 2015). The density of population is essentially calculated as population per square kilometer (Km²) of land area without including areas occupied by water. Different scholars have devised different types of densities for utilization in different situations using demographic approach and economic development indices like employment rate, healthcare facilities, life expectancy and infrastructural facilities in the area. For instance, the censuses of 1866, 1871, and 1896 were restricted to specific parts of the country because of the population structure and density in these areas.

Nigeria is one of the most populous countries in Africa, with over 160 million populations. Statistics shows that this geometric progression in the population rate in Nigeria is directly linked to the demographic activities occurring in these areas. Some of the demographic activities that take place in the areas that serve as a pull factors include the following: Birth, mortality and Migration. While the pull factors include commercial/ industrial activities, Nigeria has a land surface area of almost a thousand km² and a national growth rate of 3.2 percent per annum. (Akanni, Akinyemi, & Uche, 2014). Nigeria became an independent nation in 1960 and

thereafter became a sovereign Republic in 1963. This marked the demographic and population structure of geopolitical entity called Nigeria.

Most of the key happenings in the Nigerian population since the Independence has affected the population distribution of the country. For instance, the civil war, religious upheaval, the epidemic proportion of unemployment rate, communal conflict, military adventurism, climate change among others. Other factors affecting population distribution include: economic activities, political activities, migration, presence of natural resources, government policies and programmes, technology and innovation as well as socio-cultural factors. These and among others tends to affect population concentration in a given geographical area especially in Nigeria with diverse ethnic nationalities.

Demography of Cross River State

Demographically, Cross River State is situated within the tropical rainforest, sharing common boundaries with Cameroon Republic in the East, Benue State in the North, Enugu and Abia States in the West and Akwa-Ibom State in the South. The state according to the 2006 census result has a population of about 2,892,988.

It covers an area of 23,074sq.km and lies between latitude 7⁰50' and 9⁰28' East. Obudu plateau with an altitude of 1m575.76 metres above sea level. It has a temperate climate like other temperate regions of the world (CRS Government Dairy, 1996). It is divided into two agricultural zones viz. the mangrove and rain forest belts covering Calabar zone in the south between longitude 8⁰10' and 5⁰50' North and between longitudes 8⁰10' and 8⁰51' East (Ndidiama, 2017). The predominantly rainforest belt of Ikom Zone lies between latitude 5⁰51' and 6⁰40' North and longitude 8⁰10' and 8⁰51' East and the northern savannah belt with fringes of rainfall forest covering Ogoja agricultural zone. Two distinct seasons – rainy and dry seasons are experienced usually with early signs of rain in Calabar zone (February) and later in Ikom and Ogoja (March/April). The intensity of rainfall and the duration of the rainy season decreases from coast to the savannah belt. A mean annual maximum temperature of 26^{0c} is recorded for the state with a relative humidity of about 70.80%. Cross River State has a typical humid climate by distinct wet and dry seasons. The state experiences the wet season which starts about February/March and continues till October/November. The coastal region has about 9-10 months of wet season, while the northern region has 7-8 months of wet season with the dry months having less than 60mm of rainfall. The driest months have less than 29mm of rainfall. The state is characterized by a two-peak wet season with a short dry spell of 2-3 weeks, referred to as "August break".

The annual rainfall distribution varies throughout the state. The weather conditions and the wide range of vegetation types give the farmers in Cross River state an advantage in the cultivation of oil-palm, cocoa, rubber, coconut, yam, growing in the large plantations and also as small holding. Among arable crops grown are cassava, yams, plantain, sweet potatoes, bananas, cocoyam, rice, maize, beans melons and among others (CRADP, 1998).

Cross River State holds about a third of Nigeria's total forest area. A total of 22.4 percent of the total land area of the state is thickly forested. Large portions of the forest reserve are yet to be tapped. There are a variety of wildlife such as chimpanzee's gorillas, leopard, reptiles, monkeys and buffaloes. The rivers, creek and coastal waters breed rich species of shrimps, fishes etc: Animal breeding pastures are extensive on the grassland of Obudu Plateau and Gabu in Yala L.G.As. the major livestock in these areas are cattle, goats and sheep. Rearing activities are mainly undertaken by local farmers and Nomadic Fulani except in Obanliku at the Obudu cattle ranch (CRADP 1992: CRS Government diary 1996).

Concept of Demographic Dividend

Demographic dividend is the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age (14 and younger, and 65 and older). This means that there is a boost in economic productivity that occurs when there are growing numbers of people in the workforce relative to the number of dependents. The dividend does not happen automatically. The demographic transition and changes in the population structure should be accompanied by sustained investments in education, skills development, health, job creation, and good governance. (Lagos State Demographic Dividend, 2015). It is only a country with both increasing numbers of young people and declining fertility that has the potential to reap a demographic dividend (Bloom, 2002).

There are two of such demographic dividends. The first dividend, occurs automatically as a consequence of demographic transition which is time bound and can only last for 30 -50 years. If well harnessed can lead to the second demographic dividend. The second demographic dividend is associated with population ageing and where there has been 'anticipation of the future decline in the support ratio [this] leads to an increase in wealth and possibly assets.' The second dividend is a consequence of the actions and policies taken during the period of first dividend. The first dividend yields a transitory bonus, while the second transforms that bonus into greater assets and sustainable development. These outcomes are not automatic but depend on the implementation of effective policies (Lee & Mason, 2006).

Population Size, Growth and Composition

Cross River State has observed several remarkable changes in its population size and structure since its creation. The current Cross River State was reconfigured in September 1987 when AkwaIbom State was carved out of the South Eastern State structure, which was renamed Cross River State in 1975. (CRS Vision 20 2020). According to the 2006 Census figure, Cross River State population stood at 2,892,988. The State's population was projected at 4,221,852 in 2018 and would hit 11,567,868 by 2050 (assuming all things remain the same). The annual growth rate during the period 2006-2018 is 3.2 percent. Females constitute 49. 2 percent share of the total population in 2006, while males represent 50.9 percent (Cross River State Statistical Year Book, 2014).

Population Distribution and Density

Cross River State is mainly agrarian with a population predominantly rural, with only about 25 percent of the population living in urban areas (Cross River State Vision 20 2020).Cross River State occupies a total land area of 22,341 square kilometers, which translates to a population density of 130 persons per square kilometers in 2006. The projected population for 2018, 2025 and 2050 implied a density of 189, 236 and 518 persons per square kilometers for 2018, 2025 and 2050 respectively. These are indicators of increasing population pressure on the land over time which has environmental implications. Because of uneven spatial distribution of the population, the pressure on the land varied markedly across Local Government Areas (LGA) in 2006, ranging from 30 persons per square kilometers in Akamkpa to 1170 persons per square kilometer in Calabar Municipality. By and large, Seven LGAs{ Akamkpa (30), Bakassi (38), Boki (68), Etung (89), Ikom (91), Obanliku (103) and Yala (104)} have densities below the State average of 130, while the rest { Abi (431), Akpabuyo (334), Bekwarra (347), Biase (131), Calabar South (709), Obubra (159), Obudu (311), Odukpani (136), Ogoja (148) and Yakurr (293)} of the LGAs have higher densities than the average.In all, the population density has risen from 130 persons per square kiometer in 2006 to 189 persons in 2018. It is projected to hit 236 persons per square kilometer by 2025 and 518 by 2050. See table.

Distribution of Population and Densities by Local Government Areas

LGA	Land Mass (Sq km)	Population				Densities			
		2006	2018	2025	2050	2006	2018	2025	2050
Abi	335	144317	210607.5	262561.9	577064.3	430.797	628.6791	783.7669	1722.58
Akamkpa	4,943	419705	218470.4	272364.5	598608.6	30.28626	44.19794	55.10106	121.1023
Akpabuyo	816	272262	397322.7	495337.6	1088664	333.6544	486.9151	607.0313	4334.147
Bakassi	826	31641	46174.96	57565.79	126519.3	38.3063	55.9018.9	69.69224	153.1711
Bekwarra	304	105497	153955.9	191935.1	421839.1	347.0296	506.434	631.3654	4387.628
Biase	1,286	168113	245334	305855	672214.7	130.7255	190.7729	237.8343	522.7175
Boki	2,742	186611	272328.8	339509.2	746180.5	68.05653	99.31759	123.8181	272.13
Cal mimic	157	183681	268053	334178.5	734464.7	1169.943	1707.344	2128.525	4678.119
Cal south	270	191515	279485.4	348431.2	765789.6	709.3148	1035.131	4290.486	2836.258
Etung	903	80036	116799.7	145612.8	320031	88.63344	129.3463	461.2545	354.4086
Ikom	1,802	163691	238880.8	297809.8	654532.9	90.83851	432.5642	465.2663	363.2258
Obanliku	1,060	109633	159991.8	199459.9	438377.2	103.4274	150.9356	188.1697	413.5634
Obubra	1,086	172543	251798.8	313914.7	689928.4	158.8794	231.859	289.0559	635.2932
Obudu	520	161457	235620.6	293745.4	645600.1	310.4942	453.1165	564.8951	1241.539
Odukpani	1,424	192884	281483.3	350921.9	771263.8	135.4522	197.6708	246.4339	541.6178
Ogoja	1,156	171574	250384.7	312121.7	686053.8	148.4204	216.5958	270.0274	593.4721
Yakurr	670	196271	286426	357084	787806.9	292.9418	427.5016	532.9612	1171.354
Yala	2,041	211557	308733.5	384894.4	845929.3	103.6536	151.2658	188.5813	414.4681
Cross River	22,341	2892988	4221852	5263333	11567868	129.4923	188.9733	235.5908	517.7865

Source: Cross River State Bureau of Statistics, projected using 2006 as base.

The data above revealed the land mass of all the Local Government Areas in Cross River State. The demographic dividend has place side-by- side the population of all the Local Governments in Cross River State using the 2006 census result as a bench mark and made a projection of population increase in 2050. The projected figures are indicated in the above table.

II. CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussions on population distribution, density and development indicators has remain a great concern to demographers, epidemiologists and development expert. This is because population distribution affect the socio-economic development of the people. Development indicator is apt to designing the demographic dividend of any country of the world. Consequently, between now and 2050, there will be raising and falling in the population of the world due to the emergence of some epidemic and pandemic in the world and this will affect the development indicators of most countries in the world. Shifts in most of the demographic characteristics shape the demand for the goods and services that are critical to social development. like health care, education, employment, social protection and the use of contraceptives. The “demographic dividend,” for example, describes the period of time following sustained fertility decline, during which economic growth may be pick-up leading to human development. Therefore, economic development is directly proportional to population grows and distribution. That is, there is a high concentration of population in the area here economic activities are booming. Inclinations in urbanization represent another potential development opportunity arising from demographic processes of most countries of the world with particular reference to the African society. Understanding the demographic dynamics peculiar to each geography can inform development planning and policymaking of any government of the world. To be sure, rapid population growth is not the only factor impeding progress towards development and progress is possible even in the context of a rapidly growing population will in turn serve as a blessing to such nation with large population composition.

Therefore, the work recommends that there is need for the government for embark on the infrastructural and urban renewal programme in most cities that will developed into satellite towns. Also, there is need for the government to structure her development policy to accommodate the rural communities to curb the issue of rural migration. This will address the issue population density and balanced development growth.

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USHIE, MICHAEL ANAKE (Ph.D.),etal. “Population Distribution, Density and Development Indicators in Nigeria: The Cross River State Example.” *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 25(5), 2020, pp. 01-04.